



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville
P.O. 1600
Huntsville, AL 35807-4301

News Release

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Southern Pines native receives award posthumously

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — The U.S. Department of Defense posthumously awarded the Defense of Freedom Medal to Brenton Thomas Gray.

Gray, 34, was killed in Iraq Aug. 18, 2006, when the vehicle he was riding in was struck by an Improvised Explosive Device. Gray worked for Cochise Consultancy, which is headquartered in Tampa, Fla.

Gray, from Southern Pines, N.C., provided security for the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville's Coalition Munitions Clearance Program. He sacrificed his life to protect countless other lives, through collecting and destroying ammunition in Iraq.

Huntsville's Coalition Munitions Clearance Program is responsible for receiving, transporting, segregating and destroying captured or any other munitions posing a danger in Iraq. To date, more than 400,000 tons of ammunition have been destroyed by the Huntsville Center program, significantly reducing risks to Iraqi citizens and U.S. personnel serving in Iraq.

The Defense of Freedom Medal honors civilian employees and contractors of the Department of Defense injured or killed in the line of duty. It is the civilian equivalent of the military's Purple Heart.

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